

1978

## Organizing a Rock and Mineral Club (Part I)

Ron Bonstetter

*Iowa Lakes Community College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/istj>



Part of the [Science and Mathematics Education Commons](#)

*Let us know how access to this document benefits you*

Copyright © Copyright 1978 by the Iowa Academy of Science

---

### Recommended Citation

Bonstetter, Ron (1978) "Organizing a Rock and Mineral Club (Part I)," *Iowa Science Teachers Journal*: Vol. 15 : No. 2 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/istj/vol15/iss2/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa Academy of Science at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa Science Teachers Journal by an authorized editor of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uni.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uni.edu).

# ORGANIZING A ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB (PART I)

*Ron Bonnstetter*  
*Iowa Lakes Community College*  
*Estherville, IA 51334*

## Introduction

This is Part I of a collection of ideas designed to promote the formation of rock and mineral clubs. Such programs are appropriate for interested individuals from upper elementary grades through high school. A broad range of interests and skills are suggested to leave room for the creativity of prospective club advisors. Membership in clubs of this nature provides many opportunities for the development of interests, hobbies and careers. The desire to pursue rock and mineral studies is developed and encouraged by creating an informal setting where individuals can identify and fulfill their interests. A successful club allows its members to follow their interests, a condition which motivates club members to study geology and provides unlimited opportunities for a life-long hobby or career.

## Leadership and Recruitment

A club advisor is necessary to provide the leadership for a successful club. While the main qualifications necessary for a rock and mineral club leader are enthusiasm and interest in earth science, combined with a desire to work with young people, a club advisor is better able to motivate members if he or she has had prior geological experience.

Rock and mineral clubs emerge from a variety of organizational settings. Clubs may originate from school-based programs, a junior branch of a local adult rock and mineral society or from community-based organizations such as 4-H, Scouts or other youth groups.

Recruitment is best accomplished through personal contact with interested groups and individuals. A visit to a class, or a talk to a youth group, instills interest and offers immediate opportunity to answer pertinent questions which reinforce interests. Interest can also be generated through local news stories, bulletin board displays, craft fair displays, science projects, PTA presentations, make-a-gift workshops, contests or films. Once a club is established, new faces can be added by encouraging members to bring friends to meetings.

## Organizational Meetings

During the first meetings, the interests of individual members should be explored. Small displays of various geological phenomena at the meeting sites are helpful in stimulating interest. Guidelines for establishing a constitution, by-laws and other club rules can be obtained from the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies (2) which are used in forming affiliated junior clubs.

Regular meeting times and an active informal atmosphere encourage regular attendance. However, flexibility in scheduling should be allowed to take advantage of special events which will motivate club membership. After a club has met several times, the group will be in a good position to select the necessary officers to direct its various functions. Electing club officers generates organization and direction, and allows participation by club members.

## Activities

In order to maintain interest and regular attendance, the following ideas are suggested to club leaders for motivating the membership.

*Attendance Specimens.* Small specimens, booklets or collection site maps, can be given to each person arriving on time for the meeting. A short discussion of the awarded items could follow.

*Rock Drawing.* Everyone in attendance gets a chance to add a mineral to his or her collection. This should not be a regular occurrence and the specimen awarded should be something special.

*Rock-Downs.* A rock-down is much like a spell-down. A member must respond to a mineral name by giving that mineral's color, mineral grouping, or other identifying characteristics requested by the leader. If the answer is wrong, the member is out of the running for the specimen. The member with the most correct answers is the winner.

*Mineral Alphabet Quizzes.* One member names a mineral or rock starting with A. Another member names one beginning with B, and so on. Each correct name scores a point. If a player misses, the next one takes his letter. When all players have failed to name a new mineral for a given letter, the player with the most points wins.

*Password Variation.* One member thinks of (or draws from a container) the name of a rock, fossil or mineral. He or she then gives one-word clues until someone identifies the object.

*Identification Games.* A group of specimens are numbered. Members draw slips of paper with corresponding numbers. If they can identify the specimen, it is theirs to keep.

*Scrambled Names.* A list of rock, mineral or earth science terms, with the letters scrambled, is handed out or written on a blackboard. The player unscrambling the words first is the winner.

*Rock Bingo.* Make cards, using names of rocks or minerals in each of 25 squares. If desired, the center one can be "free" as in bingo. Corresponding names are written on slips of cardboard. The slips are drawn from a container and the players look for the word on their cards. The first to complete a row down, across, or diagonally is the winner.



*Field Trips.* Field trips provide a great educational experience if advanced planning and preparation are employed. Field trips are of two types-informational trips and collecting trips.

Informational trips can be taken to museums, private collections, Indian excavations, rock shops, equipment manufacturers, active mines and quarries, gas and water plants, weather stations, ceramic and jewelry shops, rock shows, university laboratories and programs, caves or other interest areas in the community.

Collecting trips can be taken to quarries, gravel pits, mines, railroad or road cuts, creek beds, shorelines, moraines or construction sites. Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Inc. (5) distributes a pamphlet entitled, *How to Lead a Field Trip*, free to teachers making their request on school stationery. Be sure to obtain appropriate permission before visiting any collecting site. An excellent guide to collecting sites in eastern Iowa is available from the Iowa Geological Survey (3).

*Tumbled Stone Jewelry.* By using bell caps, jump rings, chains and tumbled stones students can make bracelets, necklaces and key rings. These make great Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts or can be sold as club fund raising projects.

*Rock Critters.* Large jewelry caps for bases, tumbled stones, sea shells and eyes (available in dime store craft sections), can be used to create creatures by cementing them together. Pipe cleaners may be used to form the tails and legs. Feathers also add a special touch.

*Student Teaching.* Members may assist teachers by doing library research for a class topic, preparing visual aids, gathering needed materials and helping with class presentations.

*Student Collection Displays.* By the first of the year many students will have their collections well under way, if the club is school-based, members will enjoy displaying their collections at school.

*Science Fairs.* A school-based group may wish to add rock and mineral club projects to an existing science fair format. A contest of this type could also be sponsored by the public library, museum or other community-centered organizations.

*Traveling Showcases.* Club or individual displays may be set up in public libraries, museums, retirement homes, hospitals, school buildings or county fairs.

*Elementary Visitations.* Involve members of the club in short rock or lapidary shows for local elementary schools.

*Family Night or Open Houses.* Parents and friends love an invitation to become familiar with the club's activities. An informal evening of student demonstrations and club project discussions generates awareness within the community and opens the door to outside assistance.

**Rock and Mineral Shows.** Check the calendar of events for area lapidary societies to locate forthcoming exhibits. Plugging into a local adult lapidary group will provide a wide range of interesting events and expertise.

Many of these and other club activities may be found in the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies' *Juniors Activities* (1). In addition, the Federation is a tremendous resource for films and slides (4).

### Summary

Rock and mineral clubs provide an excellent opportunity for young people to develop a life-long interest in geology as a hobby or profession. This article has outlined the basic steps in initiating rock and mineral clubs and sustaining the interest of their membership. To pursue more fully its interest and goals, the club membership will have to learn a number of basic geological and lapidary skills. Part II will deal with the skills to be taught and the sources of equipment to teach them.

### References

1. Dare, Diane, Director of Junior Activities, Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies, 747 East Blackford, Evansville, IN 47713.
2. Heckert, C., Director of Supplies, Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies, 725 Steward Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120.
3. Rose, J. N., 1967 *The Fossils and Rocks of Eastern Iowa. Educational Series I.* Iowa Geological Survey, Iowa City, IA 50242.
4. Stinnett, E. C., Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies, 29462 Aspen Drive, Flat Rock, MI 48134.
5. Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Inc., P.O. Box 1712, Rochester, NY 14603.

\* \* \*

### Module on Energy

**Energy and Society: Investigations in Decision Making** is a nine-week instructional unit designed for high school, college, or adult students, which was developed by the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study. The activities of the module provide opportunities for students to acquire accurate information about energy, to identify and analyze their own attitudes and those of others, and to consider questions and concerns about energy-related issues.

During the course of the unit, students discuss basic information about energy, explore some possible consequences of energy decisions, and select an energy-related research problem that they then investigate. Seven categories of factors affecting energy decisions are considered: politics, economics, technology, attitudes, health and safety, environmental impact, and physical laws. Through consideration of empirical data and through examination of personal and community values, students attempt to arrive at an energy "recommendation" for their community. The issue is finally carried one step further, to the consideration of national and world energy futures.

For further information write to Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, P.O. Box 930, Boulder, Colorado 80306.